GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:448
ANSWERED ON:01.12.2015
Smuggling of Red Sandalwood
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Red Sandalwood and timber used in construction work of buildings are being smuggled in various metro cities including Delhi from various States; and
(b) if so, the measures taken by the Government to check the smuggling of Red Sandalwood and other timber?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) No such report regarding smuggling of Red Sanders and timber being used in construction into various metro cities including Delhi from various States has been received. Red Sanders (Pterocarpus santalinus) is endemic to the forests of Seshachalam, Vellgonda, Lankamala and Palakonda hill ranges of Andhra Pradesh. Due to heavy demand of red sanders in international market, red sander wood is prone to smuggling. As per the records of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau during last three years the cases of smuggling of Red Sanders detected at various exit points from the Country are as under:-

Year No of cases
2012 74
2013 91
2014 139

(b) Protection and Management of Forests is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State/UT Government and hence the action to tackle illegal felling/smuggling of trees is taken as per the provisions of various acts such as Indian Forest Act, 1927; Wildlife Protection Act, 1972; Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and various state specific rules & regulations thereof. Further State Governments take various measures for protection of existing forests including survey demarcation, fencing, patrolling, setting of check posts, use of Information Communication Technology (ICT). Financial assistance is also provided under Central Sponsored Scheme (CSS): Intensification of Forest Management Scheme by the Ministry to supplement these efforts.

Some of the important initiatives taken by the State Government of Andhra Pradesh for protection of Red Sanders are as under:-

(i) Setting up of Base Camps and Strike Forces.
(ii) Setting up of Armed Mobile parties for patrolling, apprehending notorious smugglers and conducting raids.
(iii) Setting up of Dog Squads.
(iv) Formation of Red Sanders Anti −Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF)
(v) Providing arms and mobility to forest staff.
(vi) As a pilot project at certain vulnerable spots high resolution cameras have been fixed for e-surveillance and monitoring of Red Sanders areas.

In addition, Government of India has also taken number of steps to prevent smuggling of Red Sanders including inspection of flora and fauna consignments at exit points to detect violations of provisions of Wildlife Protection Act, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) etc, sensitization of various agencies and trade regulation as per Export-Import (Exim) Policy.

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